

CottageHouseCall

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High Cholesterol Can Be Deadly



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Maintaining Your Cholesterol for a Healthy Heart

High cholesterol can lead to stroke, heart attack or heart disease. Some of the latest statistics indicate heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States claiming nearly 500,000 lives a year.

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance made in the liver and found in certain foods such as dairy products, eggs and meat. The body requires only a small amount of cholesterol to function properly and produce hormones, vitamin D and acids that help to digest fat. When too much cholesterol is present in the body, heart disease may develop.

High cholesterol is one of the many risk factors for heart disease. Learning how to manage it is essential to heart health. High cholesterol occurs when a person has too much low density lipoprotein (LDL) or "bad" cholesterol in the body. The LDL can form a plaque that may build up on the inside walls of the arteries, blocking the flow of blood. If an artery supplying blood to the heart or brain is blocked, the result can be a stroke or heart attack. The optimal LDL level is less than 120mg. More than 190mg presents a risk for heart disease; other risk factors include smoking, family history of heart disease, age and obesity.

High density lipoprotein (HDL), is a type of cholesterol that is actually good for heart health. This type of cholesterol helps the body get rid of bad cholesterol in the blood. The optimal HDL range for women is 50 – 60mg and for men is 40 – 50mg. There are several ways to increase the levels of HDL in the body:

- Aerobic exercise
- Lose weight
- Add soluble fiber in your diet
- Stop smoking
- Reduce the intake of trans fatty acids

Exercise and diet are typically the first course of action in trying to increase HDL and reduce LDL cholesterol. If you've made lifestyle changes but still can't reduce your cholesterol, your physician may prescribe medication.

Take on the battle against cholesterol. Call the Cottage Cardiac Lab today at 345-4371 and find out what you can do to become heart healthy! For more information on bad and good cholesterol call Dr. Valentin for an appointment at 309-342-9183. Her office is located in the Cottage Medical Plaza - Seminary Building, Suite 301, in Galesburg.

*For more medical articles by local physicians visit our website at www.cottagehospital.com.
We hope this issue of CottageHouseCall has been helpful to you. Please call again.*